



STATION ONE: THROWING / CATCHING

(Pitching / Catching segment is incorporated in this station.)

Supplies: One 11" Softball for every two players; Four (4) Pitching rubbers;
Four (4) Throw down home plates;

Objective:

- a. Each player will demonstrate proper warm up techniques for throwing
- b. Each player will demonstrate proper throwing techniques: easy lob; straight throw.
- c. Each player will demonstrate proper catching technique, including approach and position to ball; proper glove position, double hand grab, and feet/body position.

Have players pair up. (Use a jogging warm up, on your signal have players go "toe to toe" w/ a random partner. Anyone left over can be paired w/ volunteer.)

In pairs have each player throw:

- a. Short warm up throws, starting with knee position.
- b. After appropriate warm up, have players stand close together throwing light overhands, and underhand toss techniques
- c. Gradually have player step back, lengthening the distance between each player, 10 feet, 20 feet, 25 feet, 30' etc., having the maximum distance 55 feet apart.
- d. Demonstrating proper throwing technique, complete no less then 25 throws at each distance.
- e. After basic throwing techniques are well mastered, incorporate different types of balls to catch. grounders, pop flies, line drives etc.
- f. Explain and demonstrate the fielding ready position.
- g. Explain and demonstrate the different ground fielding position and techniques for infielders (vs. outfielders).

Teaching Strategies:

- a. Make sure each player understands the basic throwing and catching mechanics
- b. Stress the importance of outfield players and the quality of fitness required: An ideal outfielder must have: 1.) speed and agility, 2.) a strong throwing arm and 3.) ability to anticipate and to get a jump on the ball. 4.) good outfielders are essential defense against home runs.



STATION TWO: OUTFIELD

If this is the first station of the day for players, make sure adequate time for warm up for throwing is allowed. If this is the second rotation of the practice, additional warm up is not required since the station previous to this one is "Throwing & Catching".

Supplies: One 11" Softball for every player; Glove for each player.
Four (4) Throw down bases and one home plate.

Objective:

- a.) Each player will demonstrate proper stretches for throwing
- b.) Each player will demonstrate proper long ball throwing techniques.
- c.) Each player will demonstrate proper approach and pick up of ground balls to the outfield. (Down on one knee vs. bent knees for infield pick up.)
- d.) Each player will demonstrate proper catching technique, including glove position, double hand grab, and feet/body position for outfield.
- e.) Each player will know and demonstrate the correct infield destination for outfield balls, i.e. Proper relay path, proper base destination for all outfield balls.

Drill One: Place players at infield and outfield positions. Demonstrate where each outfielder should throw the balls into the infield for general plays, then switch infield and outfield. Make sure all players rotate to all three different outfield locations, and each get a chance to field in each position.

Drill Two: Have players do "Sprint Relays", as described below.

Purpose: To condition and to practice the relay pivot, long and short throws.

Number of players: 5-6

Procedure: Two players start on one end of the drill, two players start on the other end (about 60 - 80 feet apart). And one player starts in the center. The ball starts with F1 and each player makes a throw and follow her throw to the next position. The throw pattern is: short, short, long. For example, F1 throws short to F2 and takes her place in the center of the drill. In the meantime, F4 steps up and takes F1's place. F2 throw short to F3 and takes F5's place. F3 throw long to F4 and takes her place, then F5 steps up to take F3's place. The drill starts again. Just remember to have your players follow their throws and sprint to the next spots.



STATION THREE: BATTING OFF TEES:

Supplies: Three (3) tees; 18 softballs / 6 @ each "T"; Two (2) buckets; Six (6) bats

Objective:

- a.) Each player will be able to demonstrate proper placement of feet in batter's box and in relationship to the plate.
- b.) Each player will demonstrate proper swing technique.
- c.) Each player will be able to demonstrate proper placement of ball on bat at different locations on the bat.

Each batter will get six (6) hits. One player is designated the catcher (two catchers can be designated one on either side of the playing field) and has a bucket to place all balls thrown in the bucket. All other players are scattered in the field. As each batter hits the ball, any one of the fielders, fields the ball and returns it to the nearest catcher. The catcher then drops ball into bucket. When the batter completes six hits, everyone must switch. Balls are returned to the tee area.

Teaching Strategy: Give directions/instructions ONCE. Then let the batter try out the skill WITHOUT interruption. After the sixth hit, you may give additional hints/points to work on. If skill level is low for accurate throwing, have fielders roll the balls to the catcher(s). To speed up fielding.

Progression: Direct player to hit the ball with different areas of the bat, (i.e.: inside, middle, outside). After work on the "T", future lesson plans may include progressing to a machine pitch, then to live pitching.



STATION FOUR: SOFT TOSS.

Supplies: Soft Toss Net(s) 11" Softballs / Tennis Balls or baseballs; 3 to 4 Bats
(These smaller balls make softballs appear much larger and easier to hit.)

Objective: To have each player demonstrate proper swing technique.

The tosser's role is vital! The toss should be made to the proper bat contact location. The partner usually stands facing the batter about six feet away. The tosser and the batter have their shoulders squared toward each other.

- a.) Standing toss: To practice pitch selection and swing.
- b.) Two-Ball toss: To practice keeping the hands back until the last possible second. The partner stands about six feet to the side of the hitter and holds two balls in the same hand. The tosser tosses both balls at the same time and commands the batter to "hit the top ball" or "hit the bottom ball".
- c.) Soft Toss - Off Back Knee: To concentrate on hitting down on the ball. The hitter kneels on her back knee and the tosser stands about six feet to the side and facing the hitter. The tosser tosses at the hitter's contact position. The object is to drive the ball into the center of the net while working on hand speed. This drill eliminates the lower body and emphasizes hand quickness.

Teaching Strategy: Establish small verbal clues to help the batter adjust swing technique. Always allow batter to try a couple times in a row to correctly execute the skill after instruction is given before any other new "clues" are given.

Example: To get batters to pivot on their back foot, tell them to, "Squish the bug". (Keeping back foot's heel up, turn on toes, and squish the bug.)

- a.) choke up on the bat b.) keep head down, looking at the ball

Hints: Be sure to locate the "T" in front of the plate where contact is made.



STATION FIVE: BASERUNNING
(Sliding is incorporated in this station.)

Supplies: One sliding pad (card board sheets may be substituted);

Two (2) stop watches

Three (3) throw down bases and one (1) home plate; 4 cones; clip board w/
names of all participants in the squad.

Objective:

- Every player demonstrates the proper running approach for each base, including running single, double and triple bases, while staying in the base paths.
- Each player will be able to demonstrate proper lead off, and tag up technique.
- Each player will be able to demonstrate proper sliding technique (bent leg approach only).
- Each player will participate in a "run down" situation and/or participate in "Hot Box" Challenge.

START THIS STATION WITH A LIGHT JOG AROUND THE BASES

Drill One: Running to First base

- Place one cone 10 feet passed first base. Each player will run to first base making sure they run PAST the cone and TURN TO THE FOUL LINE SIDE (right side) when finishing their run.
- After everyone has had a chance, line up participants in two rows, behind home plate for a timed run. Lining up players in two's and having them run at the same time while volunteers time each participant. Let each player run three times, gathering three different timed scores.

Drill Two: Running to and from multiply bases:

Explain the approach to each base. Place players on each base, have each runner demonstrate their path/approach to bases. Have each player do it slowly, and then graduate to full speed. Look for the following points:

- In the ideal turn, the runner takes an abbreviated turn without losing too much speed on her approach to the base.
- Runners should begin to angle about 20 feet from the base. Once they start angling out they should not decrease their speed. The length of the angle away from the base should be no farther than 7' or 8' feet.

Drill Two: STATION FIVE: BASERUNNING; (continued):

- Once the runner has reached her ideal angle away from the base, she must begin angling toward the base gradually, so she can maintain as much speed and balance as possible.
- By dipping the left shoulder in toward the infield and contacting the inside corner of the base with the RIGHT FOOT, the runner is put back on a straight line with the next base. away from the base

Leads: When occupying a base, and getting ready to advance, each player will have a different lead off stance from base to base.

- The rocker step, or the sprinter start is appropriate for 1st & 2nd
- 3rd base use a traditional baseball start with one foot on the base and the other in front of the base (this allows the entire field to be in the runner's view).

Tagging Up: When tagging up, the runner must watch the catch herself. The only way a runner can clearly see the ball while tagging up is to have the correct foot on the base, which will give her full sight of the ball as it touches the outfielder's glove. For example, if the ball is hit to the left fielder, the runner on third puts her left foot on the base and her right foot about a foot in front of the base. The timing is very important so that the runner does not leave the base too early. If it is going to be a close play, she must leave the base at the exact time the ball touches the fielder's glove. The coach might give advice while the ball is in the air as to what she wants the runner to do on the catch (this is especially true with a runner tagging up at third base). This would be one of three commands: You're going to go, make a fake, or halfway.

Bent Leg Slide: Players of similar size, grouped in three's are needed to practice this skill. Two of the players will assist the runner by "spotting" the runner on each side, holding the runners under her arms w/ two hands and assisting the runner down into the sliding position.

- Either leg can be bent with the lower leg of the bent leg crossing under the knee of the straight leg. Bent leg remains parallel to the ground in the slide.
- The straight leg is extended forward with the knee SLIGHTLY BENT. (Make sure players' top leg is not stiff)
- The buttocks remain fully on the ground with the upper body extended back.
- Shoulder blades almost touch the ground.
- Chin is pulled down towards the chest
- Arms are bent and hands are up in the air.



STATION SIX: INFIELD PRACTICE

Supplies: Infield w/ bases; players w/ gloves; $\frac{1}{2}$ doz. Softballs.

Objective:

- a. Each player will be able to demonstrate the proper field position, and each area of responsibility for each infield position.
- b. Each player will be able to demonstrate the proper technique to field an infield ground ball versus an outfield ground ball.
- c. Each player will be able to demonstrate the appropriate back up position for each infield position.
- d. Each player will understand and demonstrate ending each play by quickly and accurately getting the ball back to the pitching circle.

Have each player stand in an infield position, including the pitcher and catching position, and batting position. (If there are not enough players, eliminate the catcher, then pitcher.) Batter starts each play by:

- a. Throwing ball around the bases clockwise and counterclockwise.
- b. Roll ball to infielders and direct them to make the play at first; make the play at second, - then first base (double play); make the play at third - then second base, etc. . . . After each play, throw back to the PITCHER.
- c. If enough skill, bat the ball to the fielders in turn, using grounders, pop flies, and/or line drives for infield practice.
- d. If enough skill, set up "situational" for each round.
- e. Rotate players after everyone has fielded the ball. Rotate clockwise; third baseman going to second, second going to first, first becoming the batter, batter becoming the catcher, catcher becoming the pitcher, pitcher becoming the third baseman.

Teaching Strategy: The coach /or volunteer need not be the one feeding the ball to the infielders (batter's position). This is an excellent opportunity to explain/discuss infield situations. Explain the different areas of responsibility for each position, i.e.: when should the short stop cover second base and when should the 2nd baseman cover 2nd base.: catcher backing up first baseman; all back up positions; who should call off or call for any pop flies for the infield, etc.